

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) ~~The method of Claim 7,~~ A method for providing a notification that a request to initiate an instant messaging conversation has been received, comprising:

receiving said request to initiate an instant messaging conversation;

in response to receiving said request, displaying a notification window comprising an identification of an instant messaging user associated with said request and a topic for said instant messaging conversation;

determining whether a request has been received to respond to said request to initiate an instant messaging conversation, said request to respond to said request to initiate an instant messaging conversation being initiated by selecting said identification of said instant messaging user associated with said request or said topic for said instant messaging conversation; and

in response to determining that said request has not been received within a predetermined amount of time, gradually removing said notification window, wherein said identification of said instant messaging user associated with said request [[and]] or said topic for said instant messaging conversation may be selected until said notification window is completely removed.

11. (Currently amended) ~~The method of Claim 5, further comprising:~~ A method for providing a notification that a request to initiate an instant messaging conversation has been received, comprising:

receiving said request to initiate an instant messaging conversation;

in response to receiving said request, displaying a notification window comprising an identification of an instant messaging user associated with said request and a topic for said instant messaging conversation;

determining whether a request has been received to respond to said request to initiate an instant messaging conversation;

in response to determining that said request has not been received within a predetermined amount of time, gradually removing said notification window; and

in response to determining that said request has been received within a predetermined amount of time, initiating an instant messaging conversation with said user associated with said request.

12-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) ~~The method of Claim 14, further comprising:~~ A method for providing a notification that an instant message has been received, comprising:

receiving said instant message;

in response to receiving said instant message, displaying a notification window comprising an identification of an instant messaging user associated with said instant message and said instant message;

determining whether said instant message is intended for an instant messaging client application window that is not a visible window or that is not a foreground window;

in response to determining that said instant message is intended for a non-visible or non-foreground window, displaying said notification window as a visible foreground window;

determining whether a request to reply to said instant message was received within a predetermined amount of time; and

in response to determining that said request was not received, gradually removing said notification window.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, further comprising:

in response to determining that said request was received, making a window associated with an instant messaging client application an active foreground window.

20-23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently amended) ~~The method of Claim 21,~~ A method for providing a notification that an instant message has been received from a business partner computer, comprising:

receiving said instant message;

in response to receiving said instant message, gradually displaying a notification window comprising an identification of a business partner associated with said instant message and said instant message;

directing a web browser to a web site associated with said business partner in response to the selection of said identification of said business partner or said instant message;

determining whether a selection of said identification of said business partner or said instant message was received within a predetermined amount of time; and

in response to determining that said selection was not received, gradually removing said notification window, wherein said identification of said business partner or said instant message may be selected until said notification window has been completely removed.

25-26. (Canceled)